BROWN HAWK

# CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST 74

## NOV 1982


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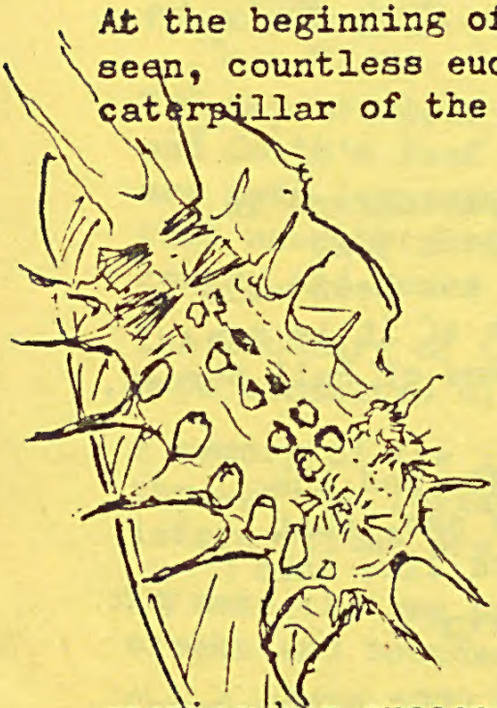
|---|---|
| President | Mr G. Broadway |
| Secretary | Mrs A. Bruton |
| Newsletter | Mrs R. Mills |
| Temp-act dep-ed | Mr E. Perkins. |


The Club is open to people interested in any aspect of Natural History and who want to support an organisation actively striving for a better environmemnt and preservation of our natural heritage.

## WAR IN THE TREE TOPS

At the beginning of what is shaping as the worst drought Victoria has seen, countless eucalypts are being denuded of their leaves by the caterpillar of the cup moth.



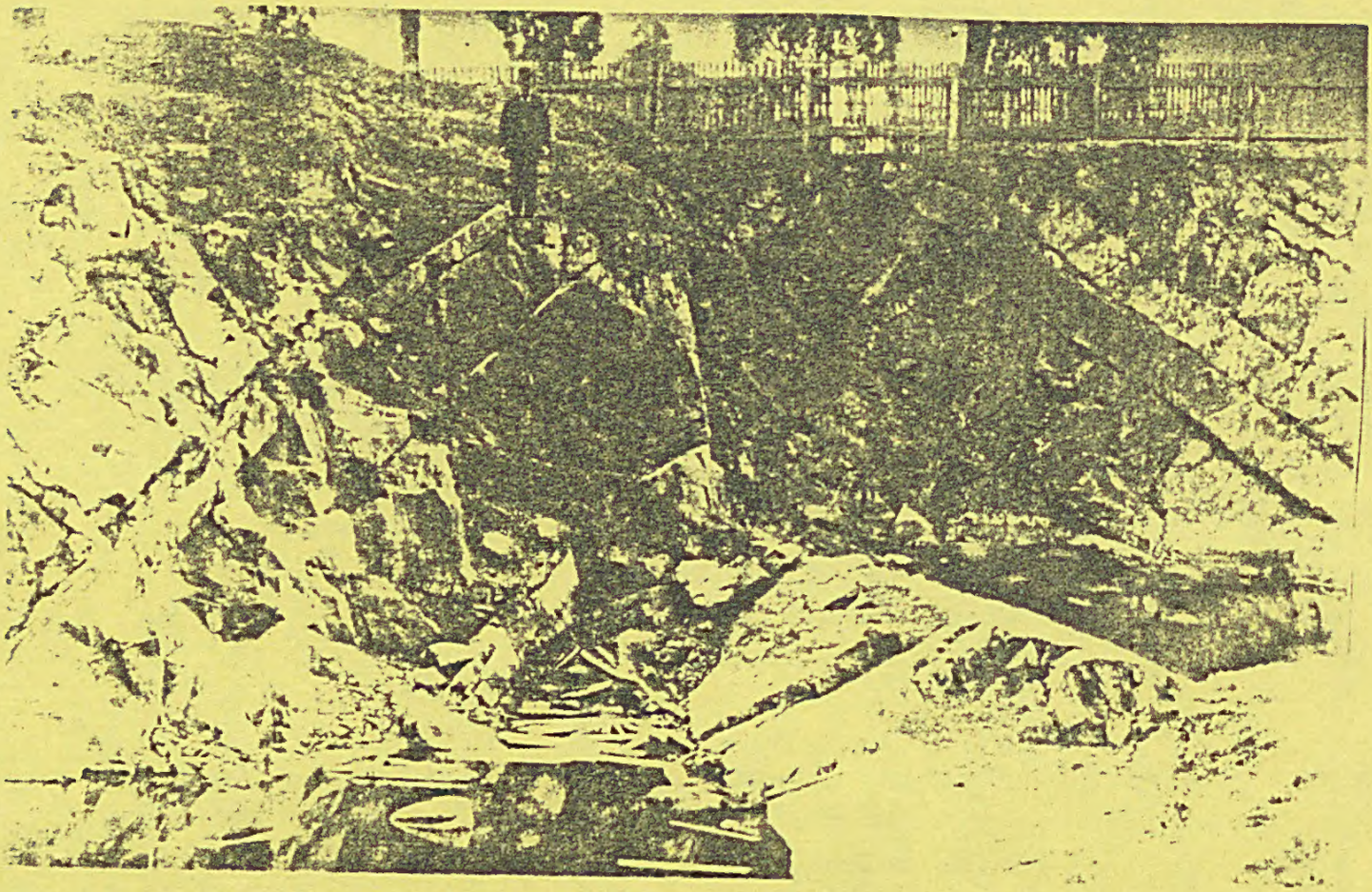
The attacks have been confined mainly to box, stringybark and ironbark trees. At the same time, many red gums have been showing signs of similar defoliation, but this appears to be caused by an entirely different insect, the lerp.

It has been noticed that many of the cup moth larvae are dying, apparently from disease as well as starvation. As well as withered caterpillars there are those on the leaves that have died while fat and well grown. They appear to have been attacked by something that turns them into a messy jelly-like mass. Maybe one of their natural enemies has succeeded in matching their breeding - possibly the ichneumons wasp.

The tide of the war in the tree tops appears to be turning, but is it too late? One theory is that the epidemic has come just in time to save the lives of many trees. The reduction in leaf area will reduce the water needs of the trees and help them survive the drought.

(Condensed from 'The Bendigo Advertiser', 30/10/82)

# THE BULL STREET ANTICLINE



This photograph of an anticline is taken from a photograph in "Geological Survey of Victoria Memoirs No 2", dated 1902. The location is given as Bull Street, but I have not been able to determine just where in this street. All trace of it is now gone. One suggestion is that it is at the east end of Bull Street, near the Kalimna boundary.

The rock was laid down about 500 million years ago, and the folding probably occurred about 400 million years ago. What immense pressure there must have been to bend rock like this!

E.P.

## Excursion to Dalyenong

Despite the drought, there was plenty to see, and once again a day in the bush with the Maryborough Field Naturalists was much appreciated. Highlight of the day for many of us was the flock of Black Honey-eaters. The bird list for the day, compiled by Stan Bruton, was:-

Eastern Shrike-tits
White-winged Choughs
Yellow Robins
Common Bronzewing Pidgeon

Red Wattlebirds
Superb Blue Wrens
Black Honeyeaters
Brown Tree-creeper
Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Orange-winged Sittella
Black-chinned Honeyeaters.
Red-rumped parrots (50+)
Souther Whitefaces
Galahs
Willy Wagtail
Welcome Swallows
Rainbow Bee-eaters
White-plumed Honeyeaters

## Bells Swamp Bird List

This list, also from Stan Bruton, gives the birds seen during a ten minute stop at Bells Swamp on the way home from Dalyenong.

Galahs
Corellas
Musk Lorikeets
White-necked Heron
Welcome Swallows
Spurwing Plover
Little Pied Cormorants
Little Friar Bird
Fairy Martin
White-plumed Honeyeater

## Muckleford Forest Map

The map overleaf shows the main roads in the Muckleford Forest and Smith's Reef Forest. It is by no means complete. There are many logging or mining tracks as well as bulldozer tracks that usually peter out. Some of the minor roads shown are quite rough, and could be boggy in wet seasons.

The boundary of the crown land is approximate only. Each of the maps consulted differ, and often differ very considerably.

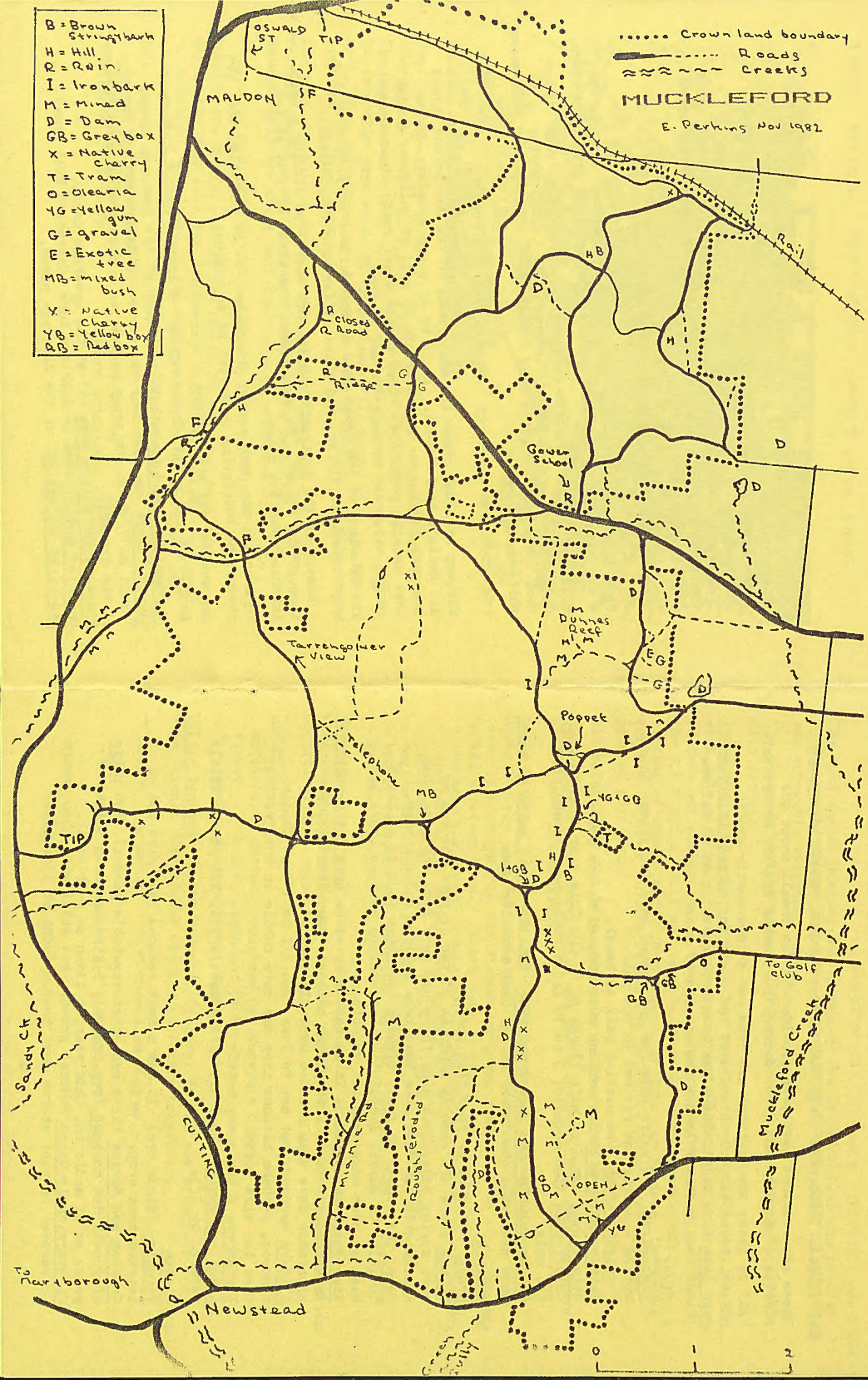
A memory of the intersections is very useful in finding a path through the forest. In some cases, the kinds of tree at the intersections are shown.

To make the map more easily understood, it is suggested that the creeks and boundaries be marked in in colour.

Corrections etc are invited

## Bird sightings for October

Sharp-tailed Sandpipers have been seen at the Sewerage Ponds.
Superb Parrot was seen near the corner of Hargreaves and Hunter Street on17/10/82. An avary escape, or a bird moving south because of the drought?
Black-tailed Native Hens (4) at the sewerage ponds.
Speckled Warbler seen in Bulkleys Lane (McKenzies Hill area)
Red-kneed Dotterells at the Sewerage ponds.


B = Brown Stringybark
H = Hill
R = Rein
I = Ironbark
M = Mined
D = Dam
GB = Grey box
X = Native cherry
T = Tram
O = Olearia
YG = Yellow gum
G = gravel
E = Exotic tree
MB = mixed bush
X = Native Cherry
YB = Yellow box
RB = Red box
Crown land boundary
Roads
Creeks
MUCKLEFORD
E. Perkins Nov 1982
OSWALD ST
TIP
MALDON
SF
Rail
HB
R closed Road
Ridge
Gower School
Tarrengower View
Dunnes Reef
Poppet
Telephone
MB
YG+GB
I+GB
TIP
To Golf club
Sandy Ck
CUTTING
Muckleford Creek
Maldon Rd
Newstead Rd
OPEN
To Nar+borough
Newstead
0
1
2

# EFFECTS OF FROST AND DROUGHT

These observations have been provided by Jim Newell about the effects of drought and frost during 1982, until 8/9/82. He writes:-

"All of these observations are from our garden-mostly exotic shrubs, bulbs etc, on the edge of the bush, and watered this year much less than usual. There has been much devestation in Kalimna 'Park' this year and last - the scourge of sport!

A. Birds

Blackbirds 7-9 pairs have fed and nested here for years; this spring 2 pairs, now reduced to one pair.
Mountain Thrush One nesting pair as usual.
Eastern Spine-bill Two nesting pair reduced to one pair.
Silver eyes Nomadic, with flocks of 20-50. This year only 15 to 5.
Goldfinches Also nomadic; 5 to 10 individuals were common, now two only.
Golden Whistler and Rufous Whistler Usually 1 or 2 pairs of each, this year only one individual of each actually seen

B. Animals

Frogs No sound of them this year.
Skinks There are usually hundreds of two or more species on warm spring days. This year there are very few, and more than a scattering of dead ones have been noticed under stones.
Bees The number on fruit blossom have been reduced at least 10 fold. On Acacia longifolia, Cootumundra wattles there has been an even more dramatic reduction.
Wire Worms (millipedes) It is too early to be sure but probably drastically reduced from plague numbers. Many dead and dry specimens have been noticed under litter.
Slaters Reduced, but not to less than 1/2 to 1/3 of former numbers, perhaps because they are more mobile in cool weather than the wire worms.
Earthworms A big query here.
Slugs and snails They are barely mobile yet, but are certainly reduced by 2/3.

c. Plants

Veronica (Birds eye) It has a much reduced leaf area but an immense seed crop.
Grasses and Medics (in a neglected vegetable garden). The ratio of growth has changed from probably 5 times as much weight of grass as of medic to, this year, 5 times as much medic.
Cleavers,Angle Onion Reduced growth, but still more than enough to recover to pest status next year. (Cont on last page)

# W.V.F.N.C.A. CAMPOUT at CRESWICK

The 1982 Annual Meeting was hosted by the Creswick Club and held at Mt Beckworth, Clunes and Creswick. Once again it was an interesting and enjoyable weekend.

The business meeting was very ably chaired by the outgoing president, Dale Nichols

Beauglehole Publishing Fund The Trust has now been formally set up, with Dale Nichols, Trevor Pescott and Albert Perry as Trustees. There is thus one vacancy for a trustee. The fund is exhausted, so that the W.V.F.N.C.A. will not be able to publish more books until the backlog of unsold books is reduced. If this can be done, the books for the Ballarat Study Area and the Melbourne Study area will be printed next year.

All naturalists can help, either by selling books or buying books.

Constitution The Association now has a constitution, only 20 years after the first meeting!

State Strategy Plan The State Government has decided to prepare a State Stategy Plan for conservation, and the W.V.F.N.C.A. has been asked to contribute to the discussion paper that will be a preliminary to the Strategy Plan. Points made by the W.V.F.N.C.A. are

- the need for proper investigation and public discussion of issues, (similar to the method used by the L.C.C.)
- publication of books like those of the S.A. Government
- better herbarium and museum facilities.
- better research e.g. combine the F&WL research section with the National Parks Service.

Shoot the Kangaroos? There was discussion about the overlarge kangaroo populations, particularly in drought areas; the Conservation Council will be asked to investigate.

Campouts for 1983

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|---|---|
| April/May | Hattah, organised by Sunraysia Club. |
| August | Kiata, organised by Horsham. |
| October | Bacchus Marsh, organised by Ballarat Club. |

Office Bearers Trevor Pescott (Geelong) is the new president and Gwen Skinner (Colac) was elected secretary/treasurer.

E.P.

## Test your knowledge!

What's a wombat for? (Answer next page)

# The Club Programme

## MEETINGS

General meetings are held on the second Friday of each month (except January) at the Castlemaine Education Centre, Mostyn St (above the SEC building).

Frid Nov 12th Roadside Conservation. The speaker will be Mr Ian Cowdell, who is chairman of the Roadsides Conservation committee. 8.00 p.m. at the Ed. Centre.

Thurs Nov 25th Business meeting. 7.30 p.m.

Frid Dec 10th Members & visitors night. If you can, bring a plate for the supper.

Thurs 27 Jan Business meeting. 7.30 p.m.

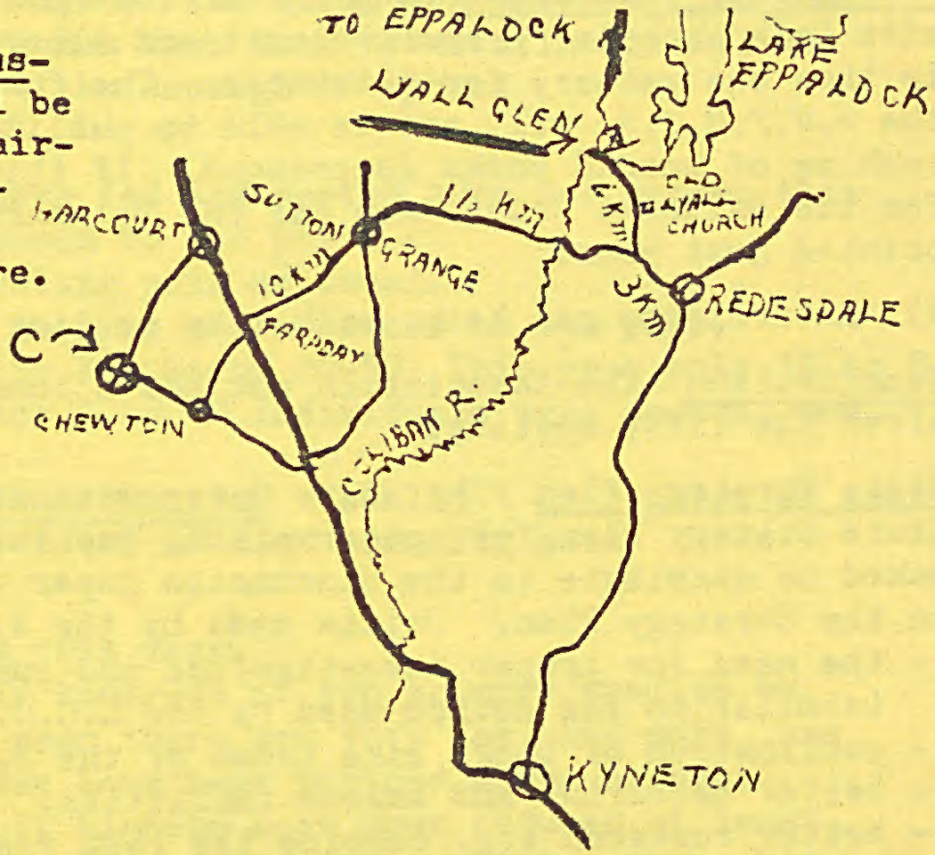
Frid 11 Feb "Where Homes are Hollow" Slides and Tape of use of hollows by birds and other animals. Also, this is the annual meeting. 8.00 p.m.

## TREASURER

Credit balance is $80.35

## EXCURSIONS

Sat 13th Nov Lyall Glen
Meet outside the Ed. Centre at 1.30 p.m. sharp. Leader is Mr Jack Kellham of the Bendigo F.N.C. Topic: Mainl birds.




Turn sharp left about 16 km past Sutton Grange, 3 km before Redesdale. John Ipsen's home on corner of gravel road, 0.8 km past the bridge.

## Frost and drought (continued)

Wattles For Acacia longifolia and A. baileyana, the plants are alright, but the seed crop will probably be much reduced.(c.f. bee activity)
Japonica Best flowering ever.

(If the drought continues, then what? Perhaps Jim, and others, will give more information next year... Ed.)

Answer to "Test your knowledge" - To play woa with. (the contibutor of this item wishes to remain anonymous)